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SUBJECT: MALAYSIA'S NEW POLICE CHIEF CALLS FOR ANTI-TIP LAW

REF: A. STATE 144327

B. KUALA LUMPUR 1661

1. (U) Summary: Malaysia's new Inspector General of Police (IGP) Musa Hassan, during a September 21 conference hosted by the police and the NGO Tenaganita, called for the creation of comprehensive legislation to combat trafficking in persons (TIP) and for the establishment of government run shelters for TIP victims. Musa admitted that previous efforts to address trafficking issues had been uncoordinated and inefficient and that greater cooperation was needed among the various law enforcement agencies. Musa also called for the creation of an interagency task force to coordinate intelligence necessary to effectively combat this crime. Facing political backlash for previous reports, Malaysia's Human Rights Commission stated they will no longer provide updated statistics on TIP. The Ministry of Women's, Family and Community Development has requested assistance in providing TIP victim identification training at proposed workshop for police to be held in November. End Summary.

2. (U) Just two weeks after becoming Malaysia's top cop, Inspector General of Police Musa Hassan delivered the keynote address at the "National Conference to Stop Trafficking in Persons - A Transborder Crime in the Region" held in Kuala Lumpur on September 21. The Royal Malaysian Police (RMP), the Malaysia Crime Prevention Foundation and Malaysia's largest non-governmental organization for migrant laborers, Tenaganita, jointly sponsored the conference. In his speech, Musa called for comprehensive anti-TIP legislation and for the construction of shelters for trafficking victims. The IGP described the excellent relationship the RMP shared with Tenaganita and his appreciation that the police could now place trafficking victims in Tenaganita's shelter that opened in June 2006.

3. (U) Musa admitted that previous efforts to tackle trafficking have been uncoordinated and inefficient, and he recognized that there was very little empirical evidence available to truly understand the scope of the problem in Malaysia. The IGP called for all law enforcement agencies to share more information and intelligence and cited the need for uniform databases to track all aspects of TIP investigations. Musa stated that the GOM was making efforts to enhance its laws to properly address TIP but that there remained a need for an interdepartmental task force. Citing the RMP's past efforts to address trafficking, Musa announced that between June 2004 and September 2006, the RMP identified and repatriated 365 foreign victims of trafficking. Between June 2003 and June 2006, the RMP had arrested and charged 143 pimps under the penal code; another 126 had been detained under the Restricted Residence Act and 18 others under Emergency Ordinance 1969.

4. (U) The RMP's Deputy Director of Criminal Investigations, Syed Ismail Syed Azizan, also addressed the

conference and reiterated the need for comprehensive anti-TIP legislation. Ismail described current laws as a piecemeal approach to dealing with TIP. He called for legislation that would address not just criminal issues, but also victim protection, shelters, repatriation, and prevention of re-trafficking. Ismail acknowledged that low level police corruption was known to assist traffickers, but that under Musa's new leadership, an anti-trafficking unit was being established within the vice squad (D-7), and that this unit would be staffed with experienced male and female officers who could properly understand the criminal activity involved and who would have the authority to address the corruption issues at lower levels. Ismail admitted that unless there were shelters built for victims, police would not be able to properly address the issue of trafficking.

¶5. (SBU) Malaysia's government established and funded Human Rights Commission (SUHAKAM) also spoke at the conference. In a side note, SUHAKAM members advised us they would no longer be compiling statistics on trafficking in persons. Due to the political sensitivities and unspecified pressures, SUHAKAM's management decided not to go through the yearly battle of compiling TIP statistics from other government agencies.

¶6. (U) Conspicuously absent from the conference was the Ministry of Women's, Family and Community Development (MWFCDD). Tenaganita had extended an invitation to the MWFCDD to participate in the conference, and despite participation from the RMP, the Immigration Department and the Attorney General's office, MWFCDD went completely unrepresented. Notwithstanding their absence from the RMP-Tenaganita conference, MWFCDD officials reiterated to us their desire to host a workshop on trafficking and proposed a three day workshop aimed at police and immigration officials in

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identifying TIP victims. The ministry tentatively suggested this conference be held November 15-17 and requested assistance from the USG in providing at least one expert trainer who can help in victim identification. (Comment: We are in contact with DOJ/ICITAP in Jakarta regarding provision of such a trainer. End Comment)

¶7. (SBU) Comment: The remarks by IGP Musa Hassan, Malaysia's top law enforcement official, provided strong rhetorical support for the drafting of a TIP law, raised public awareness of this crime and spurred a multi-page article on trafficking in the September 22 edition of a major Malaysian daily, New Straits Times. Police seem keen to identify actual victims, but time and again during the conference one could observe the difficulty the law enforcement agencies faced in differentiating people smuggling from trafficking. We hope that the pending DOJ/ICITAP police training project will provide a means for the U.S. to assist in the area of victim identification.

LAFLEUR